Management Best Practices
Contents

Onboarding ................................................................. 4
Upward Feedback ...................................................... 8
Evaluations .................................................................. 9
Progressive Discipline .................................................. 17
Recommendations for Staff Employees ......................... 18
Sample Counseling Memorandum ................................ 19
Performance Management ........................................... 20
Draft Due Process Letter ............................................ 22
Written Notice ........................................................... 24
Written Notice Offense Codes ..................................... 26
Examples of Offenses .................................................. 27
Separation Consultation .............................................. 29
Guidelines for Terminating Employment ....................... 30
Sample Letter Terminating Wage Employment ............... 32
Sample Letter Terminating Probationary Employment ...... 33
Resignation Acceptance Letter .................................... 34
Grievance Process for Staff-Simplified .......................... 35
Forms ........................................................................ 36
Employee Assistance Program (EAP) ............................ 38
This packet provides you with a variety of documents and templates that may assist you as you embark on your career in leadership, here at Virginia Tech.

You have many resources at your disposal, not the least of which are the Division of Human Resources and the Office of Employee Relations.

Please reach out to the appropriate party at any time, with any questions. We are always eager to assist however we can and stand behind our HR SERVICE PROMISE.

**Employee Relations**
employeerelations@vt.edu
540-231-2850

**HR Service Center**
hrservicecenter@vt.edu
540-231-9331

**Equity and Accessibility**
equityandaccess@vt.edu
540-231-2010

**Organizational and Professional Development**
upod@vt.edu
540-231-5100

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**Employee Relations**

The Office of Employee Relations is available to assist you with communication issues, manager and/or employee conflict, performance improvement, progressive discipline, employee management, and many other areas. You can contact us at employeerelations@vt.edu or:

- **Rodney Irvin**
  Director of Employee Relations
  540-231-5303
  Rodney.irvin@vt.edu

- **Katryn Stewart**
  Employee Relations Specialist
  540-231-2850
  kdstewart@vt.edu
Onboarding

“Hire people who are better than you are, then leave them to get on with it. Look for people who will aim for the remarkable, who will not settle for the routine.” —David Ogilvy

Research has shown that employees often decide in their first 90 days whether they want to stay with an organization long term. You have spent a lot of time choosing the right person to join your team—and now it falls on you to ensure they stay. Do this by investing in them—from day one—to make sure they have the necessary resources AND motivation to be successful in their new role.

Sending them to the mandatory Human Resources New Hire Orientation is an important first step to starting your employees out on the right step—and starting yourself out right as their manager—but it is not the only step. A few “best practices” to follow:

1. **Make sure you are in the office** and have a light work day on their first day of employment: be available to ensure they are settling in okay and to answer any questions they may have.

2. **Take them to lunch.** Let them know you are grateful they are there and that you aren’t taking them—or their experience—for granted. Make sure you introduce them to your team and explain everyone’s roles and how those roles interact with and are dependent on each other. It’s important to allow your new employee to view him/herself as part of the team—with you the leader—from day one.

3. **Give them an early-win/challenge assignment.** Have a project that they can start on immediately and complete quickly, but that provides enough of a challenge that they feel confident regarding the new role and their contributions to the team.

4. If they are in a management role, **put them in touch** with the resources and people who can assist them in learning how to manage their employees effectively.

5. **Follow up with them frequently** over the next few weeks, and make sure to sit down with them and touch base on any performance concerns (or concerns they raise) every 30 days at least. At 90 days give them a quick, unofficial 90 day evaluation so they know where they stand in regards to your expectations for them. This is when it is also lucrative to address any performance concerns and to offer your employee the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns they may have regarding their employment. This meeting often sets the tone for the next year of performance.
This program provides a framework for ensuring that all new hires transition into productive and engaged members of your team as quickly as possible. Feeling welcome and having information presented in a systematic and logical order is vitally important for a smooth transition. Research has shown that effective onboarding has a significant long-term impact on a new hire’s overall success in their new role.

69 percent of employees are more likely to stay with a company for [at least] three years if they experienced great onboarding. Best in class companies are 35 percent more likely to begin onboarding processes before day one.—HR.com, 2016

What Is Onboarding?

- A method of getting newly hired talent up to speed quickly with policies, processes, culture, expectations, and day-to-day responsibilities.
- A support process designed to manage a variety of tasks and requirements initiated once a new hire has accepted a position.
- A way of making newcomers feel welcome and excited, confirming their reasons for joining Virginia Tech.

An Effective Onboarding Process:

- Builds Virginia Tech’s reputation for having clear leadership and for being a thoughtful employer and a strong organization.
- Helps retain staff by increasing engagement and building better team relationships across the organization.
- Supports new colleagues and moves them to efficient productivity levels quickly.

Responsibility for the onboarding schedule rests with each supervisor, who should always be present on the new employee’s first day. The time frames and action items presented are guides, not requirements, to ensuring a well-rounded onboarding process. Supervisors should use discretion in implementation based on the specific needs of the new hires and the department.

Example Onboarding Program (*adapted from University Advancement Onboarding Program)

Prior to Employee’s First Day on the Job: Welcome employee before his/her first day. Plan to create a welcoming experience and provide for a smooth day-1 for your new employee.

- Conduct welcome call and email information needed to prepare employee for first day.
- Provide employee with information on how to set up PID and get parking pass and Hokie Passport prior to first day.
- Ensure new employee’s work area is ready: Space should be clean, void of old files, and set up with office supplies.
Create onboarding schedule to include:

- Introductory meeting with supervisor
- New hire paperwork
- Computer set up with IT
- Time to get parking pass and Hokie Passport (if not done already)
- Scheduled head-shot with Media Relations (if required)
- Tour and introductions
- Time to acclimate self to space, set up email and VM/read job description/etc.

Schedule introductory meetings with chain of command/stakeholders, etc.

Schedule date for HR Orientation

Determine overall training plan for job specific knowledge/management skills, etc.

Schedule key meetings and weekly meetings with supervisor (first 30 days)

**First Day:** Welcome employee and ensure they have the necessary tools to be successful in their new role.

- Greet and escort the new employee to their office.
- Conduct tour of building and orient new employee to work area. Make sure equipment works and supplies are available.
- Introduce the new employee to co-workers and explain working relationships. Send hiring announcement via email to team and relevant stakeholders. Send a personal reminder to colleagues to come by and introduce themselves if they do not meet during the typical introduction time. Make sure they know the person’s name and role.
- Review with the new employee the onboarding memo and other items on the agenda for the day. Set up email signature and voicemail (provide guidance as needed)
- Discuss unit and organizational goals, mission, values; office culture and expectations, as well as important departmental and university policies
- Welcome lunch with team members (or, in the least, with manager).
- Review job description and discuss roles and responsibilities. Discuss performance standards, expectations, performance evaluation process, including quarterly and annual reviews.
- Check in with new employee before the end of the day; ask if they have any questions and get their impressions of their first day.

**First Month:** Begin new hire’s acclimation to Virginia Tech via campus tour, meetings with staff, leadership.

- Provide overview of the department and its relationship to the rest of the organization.
- Ensure new employee is aware of regularly scheduled team and 1:1 meetings
Work with new employee to complete performance plan and individual work plan for the year.
  ▶ Note: HR policies require this be completed within initial 30 days.
  ▶ Explain Time Clock (if applicable) and leave approval and reporting
  ▶ Discuss management trainings, if applicable, and other appropriate trainings offered/required

**90 Day Check-In:** Determine if there are additional needs for support, learning, and education to be effective.
  ▶ Schedule meeting to discuss employment experience up to this point and any topics you want to raise
  ▶ Ensure new hire is feeling comfortable with transition. Are they getting the support they need? Do they have any concerns?
  ▶ Continue training/education as needed.

**Six Month Check-In:** New hire is still in transition period, but should already be a productive member of your team. Determine any additional needs for support, learning, and education.
  ▶ Check-in with new employee regarding questions periodically
  ▶ Determine appropriate annual goals and update as needed; review performance.
  ▶ If University Staff employee, conduct 6-month probationary review using form P125, probationary progress review.

**Nine Month Check-In:** Determine if there are any additional needs and encourage continued performance.
  ▶ Check-in with new employee periodically regarding performance and acclimation to the organization.
  ▶ Determine/review performance goals. Maintain communication as it related to employees strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and stellar performance
  ▶ Continue training/education with employee.

**One Year Check-In:** Recognize a successful year of employment. Continued demonstrations of inclusiveness and appreciation are vital.
  ▶ Celebrate/acknowledge anniversary. Check-in on employee’s thoughts. Are they still happy in their role? Do they have any concerns? Where do they see themselves in the coming year?
  ▶ Review and update performance goals and trainings.
  ▶ If University staff employee, conduct 12-month probationary review, using form P-125.
Upward Feedback

PURPOSE: To improve productivity and increase employee satisfaction and engagement.

Upward Feedback is a method used to identify specific leadership traits that drive performance and to confirm the link between leadership performance and employee engagement and satisfaction. Leaders are encouraged to request Upward Feedback from their subordinates in order to pinpoint areas of improvement with the goal of improving departmental productivity and increasing employee satisfaction and engagement. Employee engagement requires open communication, clearly-articulated goals, unambiguous expectations, and shared values and strategic vision.

Virginia State Department of Human Resource Management states: Upward feedback regarding supervisors’ performance is part of the performance process. Agencies must move toward including a process for employees to provide feedback to reviewers regarding their supervisors’ performance. Initially, such feedback is to be used as a developmental tool to help supervisors improve their supervisory skills. As agencies become more experienced interpreting and administering such tools, the results may be used for evaluative purposes. Safeguards should be established to facilitate anonymity of the employees providing feedback. (Human Resource Management Manual, chap 13, pg. 106/242)

Upward Feedback has the potential to be a highly valuable part of the performance evaluation process, if implemented effectively, as it provides employees with the opportunity to evaluate their supervisors on a variety of leadership traits and management competencies and provide confidential and constructive feedback with the goal of improving leadership potential, management capability, and organizational effectiveness. The information obtained through the Upward Feedback process is an invaluable training tool that provides management with a vital perspective on subordinates’ perceptions of their management effectiveness.

The Upward Feedback Process:

- Acquire the desired data via an anonymous questionnaire, completed at the request of management
  - Employee participation is optional and confidential. There must be at least five employees on a team in order to participate in the Upward Feedback Evaluation, and results will only be shared if at least three of those five employees complete the evaluation.
  - The evaluation will be shared via an anonymous survey link, with the results only accessible by Employee Relations.
  - Employees will be provided with clear guidelines on how to present feedback: professional, specific and example driven, realistically based expectations
  - Employee Relations will compile data and present to management in a concise and clear manner
- Create a viable strategy for addressing legitimate concerns
  - Management will agree to share results with their upper management in order to facilitate support and encourage dialogue regarding methods for improvement
  - Upper Management will agree to address results appropriately and in consultation with Employee Relations
  - Employee Relations will commit to consulting with Management on appropriate consideration of and weight given to concerns raised
  - Concerns raised that violate specific University policies may be referred to investigative offices, as required
*It is strongly recommended that management not discuss the results of an Upward Feedback evaluation with subordinates **without prior consultation with Employee Relations**. However, it is also expected that the results be taken seriously and that necessary strides be taken to improve in those areas in which there is a valid concern. Employee Relations is available to assist in determining how any concerns should be addressed and what resources may assist in improvement in needed areas.

### Self-Evaluations

**Performance Evaluations exist to make you a better employee—**
**and Self-Evaluations are your time to shine!**

**There are three parts to the Performance Evaluation Process:**
- Performance Evaluation (Supervisor)
- Self-Evaluation (You)
- Performance Plan (You AND your Supervisor)

(Plus, take the opportunity to update your Job Description)

**You should always complete your evaluation from five perspectives:**

**Use this feedback to:**
- Fairly and honestly evaluate yourself (good AND bad)
- Determine any necessary adjustments
  - To performance/behavior
  - To training needs
  - To career goals
- Determine opportunities for career development

**Answer the following questions:**
- “What are others saying about me?”
- “How have I performed in the past year?”
- “Have I met the goals assigned to me?”
- “What do I want to do in this position?”
- “What do I want to do with my career?”

Above all, make sure everything you do has a **specific and positive impact** on the performance of your department.
PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Effective performance management begins with constant feedback to employees regarding the things they are doing well - as well as the areas in which they need to improve. It also requires that managers ensure their employees have the resources, training, and guidance needed to be successful in their roles. A written evaluation is just one more piece of the puzzle that is effective performance management. **So how do you evaluate your employee appropriately?**

University Staff employees in their first year of state employment are required to undergo a 12-month probationary period within which their managers are required to evaluate them twice: at 6 months and prior to completion of the 12 month period. **Please see the Probationary Review Fact Sheet** for detailed information on how to evaluate a probationary employee appropriately.

While all employees are evaluated annually to determine their ability to meet the responsibilities of their position and their achievement of the performance goals set for them, the following guidance refers to appropriate evaluation of University and Classified Staff Employees only, and is completed via an online performance management system.

**Model Employees** have achieved “**outstanding performance that considerably and consistently exceeds expectations**”. This is a rare accolade and one that should be considered heavily. In order to achieve this rating, the manager is claiming that on a daily basis the employee doesn’t just do their job, but surpasses it considerably. If you have an employee that meets this standard, your job as a manager is to provide them with priorities and opportunities that help keep them engaged. Take advantage of their motivation and expertise by finding a position that both challenges them and utilizes their skills fully.

**Strong Employees** demonstrate “good, solid performance that fully meets expectations and may, on occasion, exceed expectations in this area“. Most employees will fall under this category. They will do their jobs well and will, occasionally, surpass goals. They may even (occasionally) require guidance- but overall, you can rely on them to get the job done well. Employees who fall in this category should be given continuous opportunities to grow, develop, and strive for increasingly difficult goals.

**Developing Employees** may “partially meet performance expectations, but need improvement”. If a manager evaluates an employee as developing, it is their responsibility to figure out a plan of action that will help the employee achieve a strong performance rating. This may include a clearly detailed performance plan, additional training, or more regularly scheduled meetings to monitor progress toward the goal. It is not sufficient for managers to evaluate in this manner without doing their part to ensure their employees have the opportunity to be successful.

**Unacceptable Employee Performance** is well below an acceptable level needed to meet the goals and requirements of the position. As per DHRM Policy 1.40 Performance Planning and Evaluation, a manager may only give an employee this evaluation if they have issued prior guidance on performance (via a P-143 or a Written Notice) during the previous plan year. This demonstrates the manager’s intention to help the employee achieve acceptable levels of performance.

- If an Unacceptable Evaluation is given, the manager must, within 10 days, provide the employee with a performance re-evaluation plan, via DHRM form P-112, that includes specific goals, metrics, expectations on which the employee will be re-evaluated after a three-month period, as well as the training and resources the manager is committing to provide. It is recommended that the manager schedule weekly meetings with the employee throughout this period to ensure close evaluation and support of the employee as they work to meet their goals.
- Approximately two weeks prior to the end of the three-month re-evaluation period, the manager must re-evaluate the employee on the basis of the P-112. If the employee’s performance has not improved and they have not achieved the goals and metrics set for them, the manager must make a decision to demote, transfer, or terminate at the end of the re-evaluation period.

In addition to required Annual Evaluations, it is strongly recommended that managers utilize Quarterly and Mid-Year Evaluations to measure employee progress toward their goals. This practice not only makes it easier to complete the annual review, but it helps keep employee performance aligned with management expectations, and assists managers in resolving small problems before they become big ones.

Quick Note: As a manager, it is easy to succumb to errors in evaluation such as: only remembering recent events or really big things; letting personal feelings get in the way of professional goals; thinking everything a person does is right (or wrong); holding employees to different standards (especially if they are more “like you”); or not wanting to “hurt feelings” by holding an employee accountable.

**If you struggle with over-coming these tendencies, how to evaluate employees appropriately, or have any other questions relating to the evaluation process, please reach out to a member of your Employee Relations team.**

If you have questions related to Performance Evaluations for A/P Faculty, please contact Employee Relations directly.
Written Self-Evaluation and Performance Plan

Use this paragraph to give a broad overview of your year and your accomplishments. This is your summary, if you will; and while absolutely none of this is a necessary part of your performance evaluation/self-evaluation, it provides your manager with a more easily readable format with which to get a clear picture of what you have done. What are you more likely to read? A scrabbled online format with lots of extraneous, repetitious, opaque verbiage (see what I did there?) or

- One or two sheets of paper, printed in large font and clearly organized
- with specific details of what you did and how you did it
- and how it benefited the department.

Performance Goals:

Probationary Review Goal: (for newer employees who were given a goal on either their six- or twelve-month evaluations)

Here is how I achieved that goal. In detail.

Goal 1: Here is the first goal you gave me on last year’s performance plan.

In this section, I am going to provide a broad overview of how I have or have not (and why not) achieved this goal, as well as additional ideas to move this goal forward, adapt it, or take it to the next level.

- Including, areas in which I was extremely influential in accomplishing
- Or programs I have developed and implemented that demonstrate achievement of that goal

Metric 1: Here is the first metric to demonstrate achievement of the above goal.

Here I will provide a more specific description of how/when/why/in what manner this metric was met; or, if not met, I’m going to explain why not, along with any relevant suggestions or information to be successful in future endeavors.
**Goal 2: And then I do it all over again: Broad overview of Goal Achievement; specifics of Metrics Met.**

**Job Specific Competencies:**
No need to break down each individual competency in this section, but if there is an area in which you excel, explain why. If there is an area in which you are weak, make sure you acknowledge and provide a plan for change (training, practice, etc.). For example: I believe that I have demonstrated Model Performance in all Job Specific Competencies: specifically, my high level of Customer Service acumen is proven in the 14 emails I have received in the last year (attached) demonstrating my propensity to go above and beyond; however, I continue to work on my ability to consistently present information in a thoughtful and professional manner. To this end, I am scheduled for UOPD training on “Clear and Effective Communication”.

**Professional Development and Career Goals Met: (this is for the past year)**
- Certification achieved, June 2017
- Continuing courses completed, August 2017
- Award Received, June 2017

**Professional Development and Career Goals Set: (this is for the coming year, to be later spelled out on Performance Plan)**

My career development goals for the coming year include:
- Passing Certification (Spring 2018)
- Gaining a better understanding of
- Promotion to this position (and justification for)

*Make sure you provide a justification for why/how these goals will benefit the department*

Summary paragraph...What I’ve done; why it’s benefited the department; why it should be taken into consideration. Also add into this paragraph anything else that you want on the record (things you want to do, responsibilities you want to take on, concerns you have) that don’t easily fit into another area. This is also an opportunity to present some of your **IDEAL GOALS** for the forthcoming Performance Plan. Never too early to get a head start on developing ideas to improve your job/the department/Virginia Tech!
How to Set Goals for your Performance Plan:

**SPECIFIC:** What EXACTLY do you want to accomplish? HOW?

**MEASURABLE:** How will you evaluate if you achieved this goal?

**ACHIEVABLE:** Is it possible to obtain? (But stretchable also?)

**RELEVANT:** How does this goal relate to DEPARTMENT goals?

**TIMED:** Set yourself limits (and short, mid, long term)

**GOAL:** I want to improve my performance in XXXX

**Specific:** I received low marks on my ability to XXXX on my last performance review OR I have received feedback that I need to improve XXXX. Improving my skills requires that I

▷ do this training
▷ make this specific effort
▷ “I would like to achieve XYZ”

**Measurable:**

▷ I will complete **this** specific training (that it has been determined I need)
▷ I will be able to demonstrate my new skill in **this** specific manner
▷ By my next annual review I will be ranked “strong” in this area

**Achievable:**

▷ Here is the plan I have created in order to achieve these goals.
▷ I believe I can do it based on...
▷ I will use these resources (colleagues, managers, trainings) to meet the goals I have set.

**Relevant:**

▷ This is why it is important that I do this.
▷ This is how THIS goal meets the goals of the department/my position.
INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Created on ____________________________ for _______________________________________________.

Current Position: ________________________________

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Goal/ Career Opportunity: ________________________________ Timeline: ___________________

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Next Goal/ Career Opportunity: ________________________________ Timeline: ___________________

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What is my Ultimate Career Goal or my “Ideal Position”? _____________________________________________

What timeline have I given myself to achieve this goal? _____________________________________________

Is there anything specific I have to accomplish in order to achieve this goal?
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

*******************************************************************************************

Completed Date/ Notes________________________________________

Updated/Notes_______________________________________________

Updated/ Notes_____________________________________________
INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is the value of completing an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)?

A lot of studies claim that people who write down their goals and create a plan to achieve them are more likely to do so. Regardless of whether or not this is true, we can all agree on two things: a/ It is good to have a plan of action and b/ your career is your responsibility. The IPDP helps you look closely both at your career and around the university to see where your goals may fit with the needs of Virginia Tech—and what you want or need to do to achieve these goals.

How should the IPDP be used?

This is a goal and a plan- for you and your career. It is not set in stone and it is not a requirement. Revisit your IPDP every few months (or annually) to determine if it is still the vision you have for yourself and your career—or if it is still feasible. If it is, keep working toward that goal. If it is not, change it.

Can I change it?

Yes. Anytime. This is a tool for you to use to guide your career. You can change it anytime your plans change.

Does my supervisor/ manager have to approve my IPDP?

No. Again, this is for you. However, it may be good to share it with your manager or management chain and gain their insight. They may have advice on how to reach the next steps or what training or certifications you should achieve. Additionally, it may be good for your management to understand what your career aspirations entail and what you are willing to do to achieve them.

Does it go in my personnel file?

No. However, it may not be a bad idea to include it as part of your self-evaluation, and you will definitely want to include your career goals in conversations with your management about your career development.

Am I evaluated on this?

No. This is for your personal career development only.
PROBATIONARY PROGRESS REVIEWS

University Staff employees in their first year of state employment are required to undergo a **12-month probationary period**, within which their managers are required to evaluate them twice, as per [DHRM Policy 1.45 Probationary Period](https://dhrm.vt.edu/policies/1.45). The first evaluation should occur at six months. The second must occur prior to the end of the twelve months and signifies the end of the probationary period. To complete the probationary progress review, the supervisor **must meet** with the employee to review the employee’s performance and to give feedback and guidance.

Using the [Probationary Review form](https://dhrm.vt.edu/policies/1.45), supervisors must rate their employees as:

- **Strong** – Strong performance **fully meets** performance expectations **for a new employee** and may, on occasion, exceed expectations. Managers should take into consideration their expectation for a new employee at that stage of training/experience. A “strong” performance ranking at 6 months indicates that they are doing as well as is expected for a new employee in this position and demonstrates an expectation that, should their progress continue, they will be a fully capable employee by their 12-month mark.

- **Developing** – Developing performance may **partially meet** performance expectations, but needs improvement in some areas. If a manager rates their employee as developing, they should also provide that employee with specific guidance on expectations for improvement and the appropriate training/resources necessary to meet those goals. If an employee is rated developing at the 12-month mark, the manager should reach out to Employee Relations or their HR Partner to discuss appropriate options.

- **Unacceptable** – Unacceptable performance is well below an acceptable level. If a manager determines that an employee has unacceptable performance at either their 6 or 12-month mark, they should reach out to Employee Relations prior to meeting with the employee in order to discuss appropriate next steps.

- Probationary Periods may be extended, with approval from Employee Relations, for reasons beyond the employee’s control: such as lack of essential training provided, changes in supervision or job responsibilities, or transfer to a different department. Requests for extensions must be submitted to Employee Relations prior to the end of the probationary period, using [Form P146: Request for Extension of Probationary Period](https://dhrm.vt.edu/policies/1.45) and accompanied by a completed twelve-month probationary evaluation. The total probationary period, with any extension, may not exceed 18 months, and the employee must be notified in writing of the extension of the probationary period via a copy of the approved P-146 form.
  - Probationary periods are automatically extended by Human Resources when probationary employees are on leave, with or without pay (including VSDP), for more than 14 consecutive days. If the employee is in a University academic year appointment, probationary periods must be extended by the amount of time not worked (winter and summer breaks).
  - If an employee has transferred to a different department prior to the completion of the 12-month Probationary Progress Review, the new department may request an extension of probation. The employee should be made aware that the new hiring department plans to request an extension of the probationary period prior to signing the terms of offer.

- New employees who are transferring from another state agency or from another Virginia Tech department without a break in service and have already served a twelve month probationary period do not serve another probationary period.

- Interim Reviews are recommended (using the same form) when there has been a significant change in performance over a short period. Interim reviews serve to document conversations with employees and demonstrate a manager’s attempts to support performance improvement.

- Employees must have received their six month probationary review with a rating of “Strong Performance” to be eligible to be considered for transfer or promotion to other salaried positions outside their original hiring department.

For more information on the Probationary Period or Probationary Progress Reviews, please see [DHRM Policy 1.45 Probationary Period](https://dhrm.vt.edu/policies/1.45).

Please visit the [Employee Relations website](https://dhrm.vt.edu/policies/1.45) for more information regarding Performance Management, or you may contact the Employee Relations team at x12850 or employeerelations@vt.edu with any questions.
Time-Bound:
- In three months I will have completed this training
- At my midterm evaluation, I will be able to demonstrate my knowledge in this area
- By my next annual review, I will be ranked “strong” in this area.

Progressive Discipline

The Goal Of Discipline Is To Improve Performance

- Act Immediately.
- Be Specific: provide examples that demonstrate the poor performance.
- Explain the negative impact on the business operations.
- Attack the Problem, not the Person.

Three Meetings when moving forward with disciplinary action:

**Meeting 1: “Intention Meeting”** Explain problem to employee and issue the Due Process Letter

**Meeting 2: “Due Process Meeting” (at least 24 hours later)** This is the Employee’s opportunity to explain why they feel the suggested discipline is not appropriate for this situation.

**Meeting 3: “Discipline Meeting” (within a week, ideally)** Explain final decision to Employee and issue the Written Notice.
# Recommendations for Staff Employees

This chart is for reference only. As every situation is different, please contact Employee Relations at 540-231-2850 or 540-231-5303 to determine appropriate discipline.

## Staff ( Classified or University)*

### Verbal Counseling:
Sit down with the employee to discuss the situation, including concerns and requirements moving forward. Always make a note of conversations of this nature.

### Written Counseling:
Have another conversation with the employee, but this time, follow up with written documentation detailing the concerns AND your requirements for the future.

Complete a:
- **Counseling Memo** for behavioral concerns
- **P-142 Notice of Improvement Needed** for performance issues

Give one copy to the employee, keep a second for your records, and provide a third to Employee Relations for their records.

## Written Notices:
There are three levels of Written Notice (Group I, Group II, and Group III) that can be issued. Which level is issued—and whether any other discipline is imposed in conjunction with it (demotion, transfer, termination)—is dependent on three standards:

- Offense being disciplined (and severity of it)
- Impact on business operations
- Prior discipline

Please contact Employee Relations to determine which is appropriate for the situation.

**A Due Process letter must be issued prior to a written notice, and a Due Process meeting must be held.**

## Demotion, Suspension, or Termination †

If communication and written discipline have not corrected the problem, and you have exhausted all other options, it may be necessary to consider other disciplinary options. **Such decisions should only be made in conjunction with Employee Relations.**

Retain one copy of disciplinary actions, including due process letter, in management’s employee file, and forward another signed copy to Employee Relations for inclusion in the employee’s personal file.

---

* Wage employee and Staff employees who are still within their probationary period are not privy to the Progressive Discipline Process and may be terminated at any time without notice for performance or behavioral concerns. Please contact Employee Relations to discuss your options in regards to these employees.

** Due Process is REQUIRED. Prior to issuing a Written Notice, management is required to meet with the employee to discuss the intention to issue discipline, providing a minimum 24 hours for the employee to determine their defense. After hearing the employee’s defense, the management may decide:

- Not to issue any disciplinary action
- To issue a lesser or different disciplinary action
- To issue the written notice as planned

† An employee has the right to GRIEV any disciplinary decision, up to and including termination, provided the grievance is filed within 30 days of the action taken. Contact Employee Relations with questions related to the grievance process.

†† For employee issues relating to A/P Faculty and other Faculty employees, contact Employee Relations or the Provost's office for guidance related to that unique situation.

All Employee Relations Letter Templates can be found [online](#).
Sample Counseling Memorandum
Instructions are in **bold**

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 1, 2015

From: Mary Jane Supervisor  
**Sign or initial here**

To: Wanda Doe Employee

Subject: Documented Counseling

1. **Describe the behavior. Cite specific examples. Keep in mind that your objective is to lay out a clear and factual foundation of all information that led to your decision to take this action.**

   The purpose of this memorandum is to advise you of concerns regarding your performance and to set forth expectations regarding necessary improvement. My intention is to give you a fair opportunity to correct the problems that have been observed, so that disciplinary action will not be necessary.

2. **Clarify your expectations. You may want to use specific examples in order to ensure that the employee understands. State what correction you want made and when. For most types of behavior or performance problems, you will want correction “on an immediate and sustained basis.”**

   In the future, you are to provide any documents or complete job task(s) in a timely manner of their requested due date. I expect to see improvement in your performance on an immediate and sustained basis. I want you to take the 4/10/15 Time Management workshop offered here at the university to help you with tips and strategies on how to prioritize your work assignments. I will follow up with you in 4/14/15 to see if you have attended the workshop.

3. **State the probable action to be taken if the offense is repeated or deficiency persists.**

   I am optimistic that you will use this memorandum to improve, and further action will not be necessary. Failure to meet my expectations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

4. **Offer the employee an opportunity to sign the memo. If the employee refuses/declines to sign during the meeting, write “employee refused to sign” on the signature line, initial and date. The employee gets the original, you keep a copy.**

I acknowledge that the above document has been discussed with me and I have received a copy of this same document.

---

Employee’s Signature  
Date
Performance Management

Notice of Improvement Needed
Unsatisfactory Performance

**Note:** An employee who receives at least one Improvement Needed form during the performance cycle may receive an overall “Unacceptable Performance” rating on the performance evaluation conducted in the same performance cycle. Receipt of one or more of these forms does not automatically warrant an “Unacceptable Performance” rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (last, first, middle):</th>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Position Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee I.D. Number:</td>
<td>Working Title, if different:</td>
<td>Department Organization Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Work Address (if off campus):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This form documents that you must make immediate improvement in the performance of your duties. Continued poor performance as described below may result in an overall “Unacceptable Performance” rating on the annual performance evaluation conducted in this performance cycle.

**Description of specific performance deficiencies and improvements needed:**

**Improvement plan:**

---

Supervisor’s Name (Print) Supervisor’s Signature Position No. Date

Reviewer’s Comments

---

Reviewer’s Name (Print) Reviewer’s Signature Position No. Date

Employee’s Comments

---

Employee’s Name (Print) Employee’s Signature Position No. Date
Management Best Practices

Group I Offenses
- Relatively **minor impact** on agency operations, but requires management intervention
- Active two years
- May issue a Group II Written Notice for Group I offense **if** active Group I WN for same offense
- Four active GRI-termination/demotion or transfer (5% decrease) /suspension without pay (>30 days)
- **Offense categories:**
  - 01-Attendance/excessive tardiness
  - 11- Unsatisfactory Performance
  - 35- Abuse of state time
  - 36- Obscene or abusive language
  - 37- Disruptive Behavior
  - 38- Conviction of a minor moving traffic violation while using a state-owned vehicle

Group II Offenses
- Misconduct of a more serious nature that **significantly impacts** agency operations
- Active three years
- May suspend without pay (>10 days)
- Second GR II-termination, demotion or transfer (5 percent decrease), suspension without pay (>30 days)
- **Offense categories**
  - 02-Leaving work without permission
  - 03- Failure to report to work without proper notice
  - 13- Failure to follow instructions and/or policy
  - 14- Safety rule violation (where no threat of bodily harm exists)
  - 51- Unauthorized use or misuse of state property
  - 56- Insubordination
  - 57- Refusal to work overtime as required

Group III Offenses
- Misconduct of most serious nature that **severely impacts** agency operations
- Active 4 years
- Termination, suspension without pay (>30 days), demotion or transfer (5 percent decrease)
- **Offense categories**
  - 04-3 days absent without authorization
  - 14- Violating safety rules (where threat of bodily harm exists)
  - 71- Sleeping during work hours
  - 72- Theft or unauthorized removal of state records/property
  - 73- Threats or Coercion
  - 74- Falsification of records and/or any misuse or unauthorized use of state records
75–Gambling on state property or during work hours
76–Criminal convictions for illegal conduct occurring on or off the job that clearly are related to job performance or are of such a nature that to continue employees in their positions could constitute negligence in regard to agencies’ duties to the public or to other state employees
77–Willfully or recklessly damaging state property or records
79–Unauthorized possession of weapons
81–Abuse or neglect of clients
Physical Violence
Participating in work slowdown
Draft Due Process Letter on Department Letterhead

Date

Dear (Employee name):

You are a (Title at/in Department). In this position, you are responsible for (list specific duties they are expected to complete in this role that are related to the performance need).

(State any prior conversations or discipline related to this situation.)

(State specific facts and details regarding the current situation. Include specific performance issues, ie. “You were supposed to do X, but you did Y and didn’t do X”; versus, “You aren’t doing your job well.”)

(Describe how this has impacted university operations.)

You behaviors, as outlined above, are violations of the Virginia Department of Human Resources Management Standard of Conduct Policy 1.60-(Offense Code). Therefore, I am considering issuing to you a (Group Level) written notice.

I have scheduled a follow-up meeting with you on (date, time, and place of meeting). At that meeting, you will have the opportunity to provide any information you would like me to consider before I make a final decision with respect to issuing the (Group Level) written notice for (offense). If you do not come to the meeting (restate date, time, and place of meeting), I will proceed with this action on the basis of the best information I could obtain without your verbal or written response, including the facts as stated above and your employment record.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

(Your Title)

C: Reviewer
   Department Head/Director
   Human Resources
Written Notice

Section I

Employee’s Name: ______________________ Employee I.D. #: ______________________ Agency: Virginia Tech

Offense Date(s) _________________________ Issued Date: _________________________ Inactive Date: ____________

Issued by: __________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Print Name __________________________________________________________________________________________

Title __________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature __________________________________________________________________________________________

*Inactive date is the issued date:

▷ Plus two years for Group I,
▷ Plus three years for Group II, or
▷ Plus four years for Group III

Section II—Offense

Type of Offense: Check one and include Offense Category

☐ Group I ________ ☐ Group II_______ ☐ Group III_______

Nature of offense and evidence: Briefly describe the offense and give an explanation of the evidence. (Additional documentation may be attached.)

Yes ___________ # of pages _____________ No ______________

Written Notice Offense Code: **Reinstate the paragraphs of the due process letter which describe the offense (with necessary changes)**

Section III—Disciplinary action taken in addition to issuing written notice

☐ Suspension from _______ through_______ Return to Work _________Days Suspended* _________

*Note: FLSA exempt employees may be suspended in whole days only.

**Transfer or demotion (check below as appropriate)**

☐ Reduced duties with _______ percent disciplinary pay reduction† effective ____________

☐ Disciplinary Transfer-Same Pay Band with _______ percent disciplinary pay reduction† effective ____________

☐ Role Change to lower Pay Band with _______ percent disciplinary pay reduction† effective ____________

† Note: Salary reduction of at least 5 percent is required. Also requires Human Resources approval.

New Role Title ______________________ New Position # ______________________ New Location ______________________
Approvals

Department Head Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Human Resources Consultant Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Termination  ___________________________

Effective Date  ___________________________

Section IV—Circumstances considered

Describe any circumstances or background information used to mitigate (reduce) or to support the disciplinary action above. (Additional documentation may be attached.)

Documentation attached?  Yes ____    # of pages____   No____

Reinstate paragraphs from due process letter which demonstrate history/prior discipline

Section V—Notice to employee

It is expected that the situation described above will be corrected immediately in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for employees and/or the performance measures outlined in your Employee Work Profile. A Written Notice may be used in place of a Notice of Improvement Needed Form, and may affect your overall performance rating. In the event that this situation is not corrected, or another offense occurs, you may be subject to further disciplinary action as outlines in the Standards of Conduct Policy. If you wish to appeal this disciplinary action, you may do so under the provisions of the Employee Grievance Procedure within 30 calendar days of your receipt of this Written Notice. For more information about the Employee Grievance Procedure contact the Department of Human Resource Management’s Office of Employment Dispute Resolution (EDR) at 804-786-7994, toll-free at 1-888-232-3842, by fax at 804-786-1606, or by email at edr@dhrm.virginia.gov.

Section VI

Employee Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Your signature only acknowledges receipt of the notice and notes the date of receipt. Your signature does not imply agreement or disagreement with the notice itself. If you refuse to sign, someone in a supervisory position within the agency will be asked to initial the form indicating that you received a copy of the form and date of receipt.

☐ Employee refused to sign/unavailable to sign  Witness Initials _______ Date ___________________________
### Written Notice Offense Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Attendance/excessive tardiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Leaving work without permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Failure to report without notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Three days absent without authorization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Uniform violation/personal grooming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Failure to follow instructions and/or policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Safety rule violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Violation of Policy 1.05, Alcohol and Other Drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Violation of Policy 1.80, Workplace Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Violation of Policy 2.05, Equal Employment Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Violation of Policy 2.30, Workplace Harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Abuse of state time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Obscene or abusive language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Disruptive behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Conviction of moving traffic violation while using a state vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Unauthorized use of State property or records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Computer/Internet misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Failure to report misdemeanor (if required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>HIPAA violation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Fraternization with patient/inmate/client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Insubordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Refusal to work overtime as required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Sleeping during work hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Threats or Coercion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Falsifying records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Gambling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Criminal conviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Damaging state property or records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Interference with state operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Unlawful weapons possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Patient/inmate/client abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Other (describe)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Attachment A: Examples of Offenses Grouped by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Offense</th>
<th>Types of Offenses Not intended to be all inclusive</th>
<th>Normal Disciplinary Action*</th>
<th>Active Life from Issuance Date</th>
<th>Effects of Accumulated Offenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group I</strong></td>
<td>This level of offense generally includes offenses that have a relatively minor impact on agency business operations but still require management intervention.</td>
<td><strong>First Offense:</strong> Typically, counseling is appropriate although an agency has the discretion to issue a Group I Written Notice. <strong>For Repeated Violations of the Same Offense:</strong> An agency may issue a Group II Written Notice (and suspend without pay for up to ten workdays) if the employee has an active Group I Written Notice for the same offense in his/her personnel file.</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Upon accumulation of three active Group I Written Notices an agency should normally suspend the employee for at least five workdays but may not exceed ten workdays. The fourth active Group I Written Notice normally results in discharge. In lieu of discharge, the agency may: (1) suspend without pay for up to 30 workdays, and/or (2) demote or transfer with disciplinary salary action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong> Tardiness; poor attendance; abuse of state time; use of obscene language; disruptive behavior; conviction of a minor moving traffic violation while using a state-owned or public use vehicle; unsatisfactory work performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group II</strong></td>
<td>This level generally includes acts of misconduct of a more serious nature that significantly impact agency operations.</td>
<td><strong>First Offense:</strong> Group II Written Notice. In addition to the Group II Notice, the agency has the option of suspending the employee without pay for up to ten workdays. <strong>Second Offense:</strong> Discharge. In lieu of discharge, the agency may: (1) suspend without pay for up to 30 workdays, and/or (2) demote or transfer with disciplinary salary action.</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>The second Group II or a Group II in addition to three active Group I Written Notices normally results in discharge. In lieu of discharge, the agency may: (1) suspend without pay for up to 30 workdays, and/or (2) demote or transfer with disciplinary salary action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong> Failures to follow supervisor’s instructions or comply with written policy; violation of a safety rule or rules (where no threat of bodily harm exists), leaving work without permission, failure to report to work without proper notice, unauthorized use or misuse of state property; refusal to work overtime.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group III</strong></td>
<td>This level generally includes acts of misconduct of a most serious nature that severely impact agency operations. <strong>Examples:</strong> Absence in excess of three workdays without authorization; falsification of records and/or any misuse or unauthorized use of state records; willfully or recklessly damaging state records/property; theft or unauthorized removal of state records/property; abuse or neglect of clients; gambling on state property or during work hours; physical violence; threatening others; violating safety rules (where threat of bodily harm exists); sleeping during work hours, participating in work slowdown; unauthorized possession of weapons; criminal convictions for illegal conduct occurring on or off the job that clearly are related to job performance or are of such a nature that to continue employees in their positions could constitute negligence in regard to agencies’ duties to the public or to other state employees.</td>
<td><strong>First Offense:</strong> Written Notice and discharge. In lieu of discharge, the agency may: (1) suspend without pay for up to 30 workdays, and/or (2) demote or transfer with disciplinary salary action.</td>
<td><strong>Four years</strong></td>
<td>If the employee is not discharged upon the issuance of the Group III Written Notice, the employee should be advised that any subsequent Written Notice during the active life of the Written Notice may result in discharge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that in certain extreme circumstances, an offense listed as a Group II Notice may constitute a Group III offense. Agencies may consider any unique impact that a particular offense has on the agency. (For instance, the potential consequences of a security officer leaving a duty post without permission are likely considerably more serious than if a typical office worker leaves the worksite without permission.) Similarly, in rare circumstances, a Group I may constitute a Group II where the agency can show that a particular offense had an unusual and truly material adverse impact on the agency. Should any such elevated disciplinary action be challenged through the grievance procedure, management will be required to establish its legitimate, material business reason(s) for elevating the discipline above the levels set forth in the table above.

Also, an agency may always mitigate discipline if circumstances compel a reduction in the level to promote the interests of fairness and objectivity. However, management should be mindful to treat similarly situated employees in a like manner.

Finally, violations of Policies 1.05, Alcohol and Other Drugs, 2.30, Workplace Harassment, or 2.05, Equal Employment Opportunity, may, depending on the nature of the offense, constitute a Group I, II, or III offense.
Separation Consultation

PURPOSE: To offer a resource to separating employees in order to improve the workplace for remaining employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who conducts it?</th>
<th>EXIT INTERVIEW</th>
<th>SEPARATION CONSULTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducted by HR Partner or supervisor</td>
<td>Conducted by Employee Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When is it conducted?</th>
<th>Exit Interview</th>
<th>Separation Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upon notice of the employee’s resignation</td>
<td>Whenever the employee is comfortable meeting with Employee Relations; perhaps after their separation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the purpose?</th>
<th>Exit Interview</th>
<th>Separation Consultation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To understand why an employee is leaving a specific department</td>
<td>To determine ways to improve the organization as a whole and how to keep good employees from leaving for other opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequently Asked Questions:

**Is this a new process?** University Employee Relations has always been available for consultations with separating employees; however, in order to differentiate from individual department/college exit interviews, we are now calling them “Separation Consultations”.

**Does this replace our departmental exit interview?** A separation consultation with Employee Relations is completely optional and is not in lieu of the exit interview/off-boarding process you are currently doing. Employee Relations encourages separating employees to speak with their HR Partners and their supervisors, as well as our office. The more insight we have into why people choose to leave, the better.

**Why two different processes?** Sometimes situations arise in which it is difficult for the HR Partner to be viewed as impartial due to their close work with management. In such scenarios, a separation consultation may offer the employee a perceived neutral option (or an additional chance) to provide feedback regarding their management, their job responsibilities, and their overall employment experience with Virginia Tech.

**What about employees who are transferring?** Employees may request a consultation with Employee Relations at any time. What if they were terminated? We still want to hear what they have to say. In such cases, directing them to our office may be ideal, especially when the HR Partner may have been closely involved with the disciplinary process.

**What do you do with the information you receive?** When the employee is comfortable with us sharing the information (usually after their separation from that department) we will reach out to the HR Partner and/or appropriate management to discuss any concerns.
Guidelines for Terminating Employment 
Fairly, Safely, and Effectively

Termination is a last resort for when all other efforts to improve performance or behavior have failed.

Terminating an individual’s employment is one of the most difficult things a supervisor must do; however, careful planning and documentation can limit misunderstandings and hostility. If considering termination of an employee, supervisors should consult with Employee Relations and University Legal to confirm that the action is consistent with policy and to ensure that the events leading up to the termination have been properly documented and appropriately evaluated.

In most cases, the employee to be terminated must meet one of the following criteria:

1. A probationary employee who is not meeting the expectations of the position.
2. A wage employee or emergency hire who is no longer needed in that position.
3. A staff employee who has been progressively counseled or disciplined or whose behavior or performance has had a significantly negative impact on the university such as to justify termination may be terminated with a Written Notice.

Best Practices:

1. **Involve your management chain**, Employee Relations, and University Legal Counsel in the decision. Be sure that there is a well-established and documented basis for the need to terminate and that all other approaches to improve performance and/or behavior have been attempted.

2. **If there are safety concerns**, consult the Virginia Tech Police Department and evaluate the need to have a police officer present for the termination meeting or standing by in the area. Also consider the potential risk to the university’s electronic data and computer systems. If applicable, instruct your department’s IT support to disable the individual’s network access and email in conjunction with the termination meeting. Should you need to access the employee’s electronic files, emails, voice messages, etc., communicate that to IT.

3. **Conduct the meeting as privately as possible**, ideally at or near the end of the workday in order to reduce the employee’s potential level of embarrassment. However, at least one other member of management should attend the meeting as a witness.

4. **Keep the termination meeting brief and focused.** The purpose of the meeting is to communicate the message that the employment relationship is ending. Be prepared to answer questions, but do not engage in a debate about the termination decision. Emphasize that the decision is final.

5. **Remain compassionate and respectful**, as well as firm and clear. Take responsibility for the decision and do not blame others for the termination. Designate a point of contact for the individual for any follow-up issues and advise them of their right to contact Central HR at x9331 or Employee Relations at x2850.

6. **Collect all university property in their possession** (purchasing card, keys, building access card, cell phone, laptops, uniforms, tools, manuals, etc.). Have the individual gather their personal belongings and immediately leave the premises. A supervisor should be present while the employee is collecting personal items to ensure university property is not removed or destroyed. If the individual has a number of personal belongings, consider scheduling a separate time after regular business hours, for them to retrieve their belongings. In some cases, it may be wise to physically escort the individual to and from the work area.
7. When you meet with the employee be sure to have two copies of the termination letter: one for the employee and one (signed) to be sent to Employee Relations for inclusion in the personnel file. If the termination letter is sent certified mail, send Employee Relations a copy of the letter and the original green card showing receipt of the certified letter.

For additional information, contact Employee Relations at 540-231-5303 or 540-231-2850.

† Do not issue any termination letters without first consulting with Employee Relations.

🌐 All Employee Relations Letter Templates can be found online.
Sample Letter Terminating Wage Employment

**NOTE:** Insert on department letterhead. [Date]

Certified Mail-Return Receipt Requested-[optional]

[Date]

Mr./Ms. ________________________________

_______________________________________________

Dear Mr./Ms.: ________________________________

This letter is to notify you that you are being terminated from your temporary wage position with the ________ [name of office], effective close of business on [date].

Please turn in your uniforms, Hokie Passport, keys, parking permit and any other departmental equipment in your possession. *(Edit as appropriate, specifying such things as electronic security passes, computers, cell phones, etc. Include a statement about access to systems if appropriate: Your access to [Banner/Hokie Mart/other systems] will be terminated immediately. PIDs are not terminated and access to Virginia Tech email is not usually terminated immediately unless there are security concerns)*

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

cc: Human Resources
Sample Letter Terminating Probationary Employment

NOTE: Insert on department letterhead. [Date]

[Date]

[Employee Name]

[Address]

Dear [Employee]:

You are currently in a probationary employment status in the [College/Department] at Virginia Tech, working as a [Job Title]. In accordance with University policy 4260, Probationary Period for University Staff Employees, we have decided to terminate your employment effective [DATE, TIME].

Please turn in your uniforms, Hokie Passport, keys, parking permit and any other departmental equipment in your possession. (Edit as appropriate, specifying such things as electronic security passes, computers, cell phones, etc. Include a statement about access to systems if appropriate: Your access to [Banner/Hokie Mart/other systems] will be terminated immediately. PIDs are not terminated and access to Virginia Tech email is not usually terminated unless there are security concerns.)

Please contact the Benefits Office in Human Resources at 540-231-9331 for information about your benefits. You may also contact the Employee Relations office in the Human Resources for information about resources available to you.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

cc: Director Human Resources
Resignation Acceptance Letter

[Date]

[Employee Name]

Address

Re: Resignation Acceptance

Dear [Employee]:

This is to acknowledge receipt and acceptance of your resignation as a [Job Title] in the [Program/Department]. The effective date of your resignation was/is close of business [date].

Please turn in your uniforms, Hokie Passport, keys, parking permit and any other departmental equipment in your possession. Edit as appropriate, specifying such things as electronic security passes, computers, cell phones, etc. Include a statement about access to systems if appropriate: Your access to [Banner/Hokie Mart/other systems] will be terminated immediately. PIDs are not terminated and access to Virginia Tech email is not usually terminated unless there are security concerns.) You should also contact the Benefits Office in Human Resources at 540-231-9331 for information about your benefits.

On the behalf of the [Department/Program/Office], I would like to thank you for your service, and wish you well in your new opportunities.

Sincerely,

[Supervisor]

[Title]

cc: Human Resources
Grievance Process for Staff-Simplified

If you intend to file a grievance or are in receipt of a grievance, please contact the Office of Employee Relations immediately at 540-231-2850 or employeerelations@vt.edu.

Employees are encouraged to resolve workplace issues directly with their management chain. However, when faced with specific management actions such as formal discipline or lack of resolution of a concern, Staff Employees who have completed their probationary periods may decide to initiate a Grievance.

A Grievance is a formal process through which a state employee may raise any workplace concern with his or her management. This process ensures that the issue addressed is given appropriate consideration by the management chain.

In general, a grievance may be filed against any management action within 30 calendar days from the date of that action. Responses to the grievance must be provided within 5 days from receipt in order to maintain compliance with the process.

The following chart demonstrates the Step-Respondent process:

All responses to the Grievance and advances of the Grievance to the next step must be confirmed and acknowledged via a signature and date on Grievance Form A.


Additional information may also be found by reviewing the Virginia Tech Employee Relations Grievance Process.
Initiating a Grievance

- An employee must initiate a grievance on a fully completed, dated, and signed Grievance Form A within 30 calendar days of the action being grieved. In most cases the employee must initiate the grievance with their immediate supervisor. Exceptions to this must be approved through Employee Relations.

- A grievance involving a demotion, suspension without pay, non-disciplinary separation, or any other action that results in a loss of wages may be initiated directly with the VP or Dean by submitting Grievance Form A-Expedited Process.

- A grievance involving a termination due to formal discipline or unsatisfactory performance may be initiated directly with the DHRM Office of Employment Dispute Resolution by submitting a Grievance Form A-Dismissal Grievance.

- A grievance involving formal discipline (Written Notice) issued by someone other than the employee’s immediate supervisor may initiated with the person who issued the discipline.

- A grievance challenging the application of the layoff policy should be initiated directly with Employee Relations.

- Employees alleging discrimination or harassment under Title VII or Title IX should file their complaint directly with the Office for Equity and Accessibility.

Management Steps

- Once a supervisor is in receipt of the grievance, they have five work days in which to respond to the grievance—either by granting the requested relief, denying the requested relief, or suggesting an alternative form of relief.

- All responses must be documented on Grievance Form A.

- The second step respondent must meet with the Grievant. In the case of an Expedited Grievance, the Dean or VP must hold that meeting.
The Management Respondent Steps are as follows: Any exception must be approved by Employee Relations.

- First Resolution Step: The First Step Respondent is usually the immediate supervisor.
- Second Resolution Step: The Second Step Respondent is usually the Department Head, Director, or equivalent.
  - Within 5 workdays of the second-step respondent’s receipt of the grievance, the second-step respondent must hold a meeting with the employee. An individual selected by the employee and an individual selected by the second-step respondent may optionally be included in this meeting.
- Third Resolution Step: The Third Step Respondent must be the Dean, Vice President, or equivalent of the relevant department.

* Please confer with Employee Relations immediately upon your receipt of a grievance and keep them apprised of any responses.

**State law prohibits retaliation against employees who participate in the grievance process.**
Employee Relations

HOKIE WELLNESS

North End Center › 300 Turner St. NW › Suite 2300 (0318) › Blacksburg, VA 24061
540-231-8878 › hokiewellness@vt.edu › www.hokiewellness.vt.edu

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Overview

EAP services are provided to employees who seek assistance or counseling through difficult times.

If you need assistance or want someone to talk to, Hokie Wellness is available to help.

► Call Hokie Wellness at 540-231-8878, or send an email to hokiewellness@vt.edu to speak to a wellness team member.

► If you have a loss in your department or need additional resources, Hokie Wellness can coordinate support and grief counseling for your group.

Benefited Employees

Hokie Wellness can schedule a confidential, individual appointment with you, connect you to an EAP provider, or you can call the provider directly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Or Benefit</th>
<th>Who To Contact For Your Confidential Services Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVA Care and COVA HDHP-Anthem</td>
<td>1-855-223-9277 or Anthem EAP at <a href="http://www.anthemEAP.com">www.anthemEAP.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Login: Commonwealth of Virginia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVA HealthAware-Aetna</td>
<td>1-888-238-6232 or <a href="http://www.mylifevalues.com">www.mylifevalues.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Username: COVA, Password: COVA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Beacon: 1-866-517-7042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benefited employees and their dependents are able to receive four EAP sessions with a counselor at no charge. There are a variety of issues that EAP counselors can assist you with, including:

► Alcohol                         ► Mental health
► Drugs                           ► Child care
► Family                         ► Elder care
► Legal                          ► Grief
► Health                         ► Spousal/child/parent abuse
► Financial                      ► Workplace
► Housing                        ► Career planning
► Retirement
Other Counseling Assistance

If you are a non-benefited employee at Virginia Tech, you can contact one of these counseling options in the Blacksburg area.

Psychological Services Center at Virginia Tech
- Director: Lee Cooper
- Phone Number: 540-231-6914
- Address: 3110 Prices Fork Road, Blacksburg, Va. 24060
- Additional Information: Sliding fee scale
- www.psyc.vt.edu/outreach/psc

Women’s Center at Virginia Tech
- Directors: Anna LoMascolo and Christine Dennis Smith
- Phone Number: 540-231-7806
- Address: 206 Washington Street, Blacksburg, Va. 24061
- Additional Information: Call the number above from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Friday and ask to schedule an appointment. Email addresses for counselors and staff available online.
- www.womenscenter.vt.edu

New River Valley Community Services
- Interim Director: Rosemarie Sullivan
- Phone Number: 540-961-8400
- Address: 700 University Boulevard, Blacksburg, Va. 24060
- Additional Information: Sliding fee scale.
- www.nrvcs.org

Behavioral Health Program
- Executive Director: Michelle Brauns
- Phone Number: 540-381-0820
- Address: 215 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Va. 24073. Other locations are available online.
- Additional Information: The Community Health Center of the New River Valley’s provides affordable and high quality medical, dental, behavioral and preventive health services to people of all ages and circumstances, regardless of ability to pay or insurance status.
- www.chcnrv.org/search/behavioral-health-care/

For Immediate Assistance
- Call 911

Virginia Tech Police Department
- Phone: 540-231-6411
- The Virginia Tech Police Department has a threat assessment team in place for any immediate issue or concern.

New River Valley Community Services - Emergency and Assessment
- Contact Access Services
- Phone: 540-961-8400
- Address: 700 University City Boulevard, Blacksburg, Va. 24060

Marriage and Family Therapy Center of Virginia Tech
- Director: Megan Dolbin-McNabb
- Phone Number: 540-231-7201
- Address: 840 University Boulevard, Suite 1, Blacksburg, Va. 24060
- Additional Information: Sliding fee scale.
- www.familytherapy.vt.edu/ftc.html
Division of Human Resources

OFFICE OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

North End Center, Suite 2300 (0318)
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, VA 24061

540-231-9331
www.hr.vt.edu/our-workplace/employee-relations.html
employeerelations@vt.edu

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LIVE. LEARN. WORK.

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